

## PRESS RELEASE

### INTERNATIONAL AGRI AND FOOD STANDARDS BODIES TELL MYANMAR: “WE WANT TO HELP YOU ACCESS NEW MARKETS FOR YOUR PRODUCE”

8 November 2016

Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB), together with PRIME Agri, co-hosted a roundtable in Naypyidaw on 8/9 November to discuss how Myanmar could enhance food safety and responsible sourcing in primary agricultural production, post-harvest, and food processing. An increased focus on responsible sourcing will enable Myanmar to access new markets and increase agriculture and food exports from Myanmar.

The multistakeholder roundtable was co-sponsored by the governments of Switzerland and New Zealand. It was attended by around [70] Myanmar stakeholders and international experts from leading food safety and standards organisations such as GLOBALG.A.P., Fairtrade, FSSC22000 and the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

Myanmar stakeholders included officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MOALI) and the Food and Drug Administration, Parliamentarians, Myanmar agriculture and food businesses and international investors, consumer groups, workers organisations and development partners.

The workshop was addressed by [Dr Tin Htut, Permanent Secretary of MOALI, on behalf of Minister U Aung Thu] who told participants: *‘Myanmar is committed to adopting widely accepted international standards, in order to unlock market access for higher value agriculture and food products’.*

In a message to the conference, Dr Kristian Moeller, the CEO of GLOBALG.A.P., the most recognised food safety standard for primary agricultural production in the world said *‘GLOBALG.A.P. will look into establishing the GLOBALG.A.P. Academy in Myanmar to assist implementation of a food safety and sustainability culture that positions Myanmar as a reliable food supply country to local and international markets’.*

Participants also heard presentations from other experts including Fons Schmid, Chair of FSSC22000, and former Chair of the GFSI, and from a variety of Myanmar and foreign companies who are taking steps to improve food standards in a variety of commodities including coffee, rice and fruit and vegetables.

Conference participants underlined the importance of Myanmar producers aiming to align themselves with recognised international standards, in order to access new markets. *‘There is no need to reinvent the wheel’*, said Vicky Bowman, Director of MCRB. *‘GlobalG.A.P., FSSC22000, and FairTrade USA are widely recognized by international food industry and retailers as the main standards for food safety, sustainability, and overall responsible sourcing.’*

Kenneth Shein, CEO of PRIME Holdings added *'Implementing them with our smallholders and agricultural supply chains is a key to unlocking access to higher value markets and attracting foreign investment in food processing industry. These important steps will not only benefit local consumers and increase foreign exchange earnings. They will also raise incomes and quality of life in Myanmar's rural areas where some 70% of our people are engaged in agrarian livelihoods.'*

### Background

1. The Agenda and Concept Note of the conference are available on request. All the presentations and a report of the workshop will be available on [www.mcrb.org.mm](http://www.mcrb.org.mm).
2. Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) is a Yangon-based initiative funded by the UK, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Netherlands and Ireland, based on collaboration between the UK-based Institute of Human Rights and Business, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. The Centre was established to provide an effective and legitimate platform for the creation of knowledge, capacity and dialogue concerning responsible business in Myanmar, based on local needs and international standards, which results in more responsible business practices. It is a neutral platform working with businesses, civil society and government.
3. PRIME Agri Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Singapore-based PRIME Holdings Pte Ltd, is an investor, developer, and operator of an integrated agriculture and food operation in Myanmar, centred around food safety and sustainability compliance.

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